

The Time Is Now For California To Pass A Water Package Including Storage, Conveyance And Long-Term Water Plans

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) sent a letter to the California State Senate and Assembly urging both chambers take the lead and craft a robust water package to improve California's broken water system. The text of the letter is below. Please click [here](#) to view a copy of the letter.

October 29, 2009

The Honorable Darrell Steinberg

The Honorable Karen Bass

President pro Tempore

Speaker

California State Senate

California State Assembly

State Capitol

State Capitol

Room 205

Room 219

Sacramento, California 95814

Sacramento, California 95814

Re: State Water Legislation Package

Dear Senator Steinberg and Speaker Bass:

In 1982, I was completing my second term in the California State Assembly when legislation approving the Peripheral Canal that I helped to support and pass was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown and then failed on a statewide ballot. Since then, the state legislature has had numerous opportunities to find common ground on a long-term solution to fix California's broken water system. As you may know, I authored and helped to win statewide approval of four water bonds, raising more than \$2 billion to improve California's water system and provide safe, reliable drinking water to our communities. At that time, many of the beneficiaries of these funds pledged to help fix our water system and add to our water supply to meet the demands of a growing population. That support has regrettably remained elusive. Every Governor since Jerry Brown has tried to repair California's outdated water system. You now have an opportunity change the pattern and make history.

It is unfortunate that the San Joaquin Valley has been the only region of California that has had to sacrifice its water for the rest of the state, and with no proven benefits whatsoever to the system as a whole. As you are both well aware, despite the millions of acre-feet of water that has been diverted away from the Valley for environmental and ecosystem restoration purposes, the Delta is arguably in the worst shape it has ever been. The fisheries are still on a rapid decline, possibly to the point of extinction for the Delta smelt; and farmers, farm workers, and farm communities in my District are feeling the devastation of a three year drought and regulatory restrictions for which we should have already been prepared. A comprehensive approach is needed now that secures a sustainably water supply for every region of California, before it is too late and the Valley literally withers and dries out.

As a Member of Congress, I have been fighting every day to find short, mid, and long-term solutions to bring more water to our Valley. This includes pressing the Administration in the short-term to use all flexibility and discretion in its power to increase pumping to water users

south of the Delta, to approve transfers expeditiously, and to fast-track projects such as Two-Gates and the Intertie, which can facilitate this process and enhance our water supply. In the long-term, we must continue to work on the federal level to modify the Endangered Species Act and provide funding so that infrastructure projects like these can keep moving forward.

At the same time, we need to fix the Delta and build more storage capacity. The state must take the lead in these efforts and push for a robust water package that includes funding for storage and conveyance, along with a viable long-term plan to restore our broken plumbing system. Your leadership is desperately needed to ensure that we do not miss another opportunity like we did in 1982. I look forward to seeing decisive action from the state legislature in working to finalize a water package as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continued efforts on this issue.

Sincerely,

JIM COSTA

Member of Congress

